August 22, 2014

Dear Bob,

Here are two letters from Chester Versteeg to me for the Chapter's archives. I sent copies to you some time ago. I am currently doing some "downsizing" and would like these originals to have a permanent home.

Cheers!

Fred

Fred Johnson

MILLION DOLLAR CLUB

PACIFIC MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

CHESTER VERSTEEG
328 PACIFIC MUTUAL BLDG.
TRINITY 9501

LOS ANGELES

OCT 19 1942

Mr. Fred Johnson
Cal-Prep School
Ojai - California

Dear Fred:

Thanks greatly for your fine letter of October 15. I had heard from Harry Paley, but you have given me the whole story.

Since Harry drove the car as far North as he did, it saved many hours of climbing, I'm sure you would all have made it but gotten back late Monday night instead of Sunday. It is a marvellous trip and I know you will never forget it.

Harry Paley, Freda Walbrecht and myself were sworn in at the annual dinner, Niles Werner being unable to get there. We had a very clever burro stunt in connection with swearing in and are going to have the same stunts each year with a new idea involved each time. It took in fine shape.

We are going to have a sponsor sppointed for the section each year - after the war - to see that the climbs are properly scheduled, to give out information, etc. We are also going to work out a new badge for the section after the war is over.

Hope you will write your Dad and tell him all about the trip too. As ever, with very best wishes,

Sincerely,

Chester Versteeg

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LOS ANGELES

September the Twenty-second

1 9 4 2

My dear Fred Johnson;

To supplement my hurried chat with you upon bumping into you, Sixth and Hill, yetserday, here are the two citations I spoke to you about, plus several others I am sure you will enjoy reading and seeing the photos involved.

Am quite sure you can secure all of these at the Library in Ventura, except, probably, the magazine TRAVEL, which I am sure you can find in the library at Santa Barbara.

TRAVEL- Oct., 1936- TULAINYO-HIGHEST LAKE IN NORTH AMERICA

(Here are some things space would not permit to be kept in the published article: The marvelous sunrise, especially as the sun's rays burst thru the shattered Sierra Crest at the immediate east side of the lake; the full reactions in the first swim of any human in the highest lake on our continent (you know, swimming in ice-cold waters at nearly 13,000 feet elev. is not quite as thrilling as it sounds); the mean hail and thunderstorm I had to face, alone, on Wallace Creek, just below Wallace Lake, on the back-pack trip from Whitney Outpost Camp to Tulainyo Lake; the tough day's activities, involving the climb of Tunnabora Peak before breakfast; the swim in the lake; packing down to Wallace Creek; a late combined breakfast-lunch; then the first ascent of the highest of the Four Grandchildren- about 12,800 feet; then all the miles clear back to Crabtree Meadows Ranger Station, where, after falling into Crabtree Creek-no Whitney Creek,- in the dark (I had no flashlight) and getting into the ranger station at 10 P. M.; ranger gone to fight a fire down Kern Canyon- I built fire and dried out and had late dinner- some one day of travel and experiences.

Then, next day was a tough day- started late, 10 A. M. as I was too darned tired to get started earlier; climbed The Grandmother- about 13,400 feet- a second ascent; then Mt. Ypung, a third ascent; then another peak near Young- a second ascent; then with pack to top of Whitney Pass just by dark; then down the Whitney trail to Outpost Camp

without flashlight, losing trail in water and snows about four times, but keeping my promise to get back to my family camping there by that night.

By the way, while four of my friends visited Tulainyo Lake the next year, at my suggestion, and gave me a photo of two of the fellows swimming in the lake, yet, after calling attention to fact that their necks and heads were upright in the water, they jokingly confessed that they just waded out, but never swam in the lake. I doubt if any humn has ever swam in Tulainyo since my first swim. Altho I have been swimming in High Sierra lakes for nearly 25 years, yet, without intending to, I did a very smart thing. Namely, trying to screw up courage to take the plunge and swim- the very thing I came up there to do, I decided, first to putter around and, with a small rope, a thermometer and rock, I tested the temperature of the lake at its surface and then at about 25 feet below surface- see article- by that time I had gotten my wrists and ankles so cooled and blood temperature lowered that the shock of the dip and swim was considerably reduced. The old heart could have been stopped- just like that!!)

Spectre of the Brocken from Whitney- NEW YORK TIMES- Travel Section, Sunday, Oct. 3, 1937. Two dandy photos of Whitney- one an air photo. The part about the Brocken starts about two-thirds way down the first column of article.

White Mountain Peak- First traverse ever made of the nountain- LOS ANGELES SUNDAY TIMES, Rotogravure Section, July 16, 1939. (See this before you go on that White Mtn. trip, if possible. You will have no snow this time of the year. I expected, on that trip, to have about 2 miles of it; we had 8 miles, breaking thru ankle deep every step, knee deep hundreds of times; hip deep many times. Very tiring and trying. Instead of getting to top of peak at noon, as we planned, was 5 P. M. and down to timber line on east side at 10 P. M., too tired to eat. All the fellows on that trip, including Bill Crookston, who had climbed the north side of Rainier, and since then, Ixtacihuatl in Mexico (over 17,000 feet) still says the White Mtn. traverse was harddest trip of his life. This due to the traverse and the heavy snows. their lives.

Planting golden trout in Tulainyo-highest lake on Continent- Rotogravure Section, LOS ANGELES SUNDAY TIMES, Jan. 1st, 1939.

Re First girl, 9 years or younger, ever to climb a trail-less peak over 14,000 feet- See LOS ANGELES SUNDAY TIMES, Rotogravure Section, April, 24, 1938- Our two girls, with hair bobbed, look like a couple of boys. Both Bobbed!

For OLD AND NEW TYPES OF HIGH MOUNTAIN RECORD CONTAINERS- see photos and article, LOS ANGELES SUNDAY TIMES, City News Section, Jan. 8, 1939.

HOW NAMES IN HIGH SIERRA HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED- See full double page sheet of photos and data in LOS ANGELES TIMES, Feb. 20,1939. (This appeared in the first Monday ed. that came out Sunday nite, and may not be in library there, but try it).

Maybe, when home on Xmas vacation, you can come over and see our scrap-bbok. Phone us then. Because Mrs. V. got home Saturday, I could not go to Stony Point. Cheerio- Charles Vernieg